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But He Never Enlisted...

Sewell Hall

He served in the Army but "he isn't a soldier" We believe there is a lesson in the following AP report: "An Army spokesman said Friday that 15 year old Walter Lee Martin is not recognized as a soldier -- despite two periods of serving in Vietnam-- because he did not enlist, was not drafted, and did not enter the Army through any regular means. 'He was not officially in, did not officially enlist or enter through any normal means,' Barrante said. 'He was, in fact, not a soldier. He isn't a soldier.'"

Two periods of service in Vietnam, twice wounded in action; yet, no purple hearts, no honorable discharge, no veteran's benefits; he did not legally enlist.

This reminds us of a host of men and women whom we have observed serving among the soldiers of the army of the Lord. They serve faithfully and even sacrificially. They reject the sins of the flesh and live a pure life. They attend services regularly, give liberally of their money, and are ready to every good work. They often study the Bible, defend the truth, and attack error. Often, they are outstanding in their performance as soldiers, except that they have never enlisted!

The "Captain of our salvation" knew in advance there would be such individuals. He warned of the fate they may expect -- "many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?' And then will I profess unto them, 'I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity'" (**Mt. 7:22-23**). What a pity to spend a lifetime enduring "hardships as a good soldier" only to miss the "veteran benefits" because of a failure to enlist.

There was no way that the young man described above could have legally enlisted, he was ineligible. But anyone who is a sinner can enlist in the army of the Lord if he is willing to leave his sins. The conditions are simple: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (**Mk. 16:16**). "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (**Acts 2:38**).

Dr. Feelgood Vs. The Great Physician

Ryan Hasty

Matthew 9:12 -- "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick."

A common pet-peeve of many doctors is convincing his patient to be open and honest about the symptoms of his disease. Though any doctor worth his salt wants to fix the problem, not every patient desires to be completely healed of their disease. Eager to present themselves in a positive light, many patients are fearful of being lectured or judged by their physician for their bad lifestyle choices. Other patients are simply looking for pain medication to dull the hurt or continued disability to prolong their co-dependence. What they actually need is hard medicine, but they seldom take it because often their goal is a quick, temporary fix to get them through the week.

Dr. Feel Good, on the other hand, is very popular with these patients. If they are interested in simply dulling the pain brought on by their disease, he will provide all of the opiates their heart desires. If the patient is looking for a statement to support continued SSI/SSD disability, they will go out of their way to accommodate. Dr. Feel Good never rebukes your lifestyle; he will never judge your irresponsible choices; he will never speak negatively. His only goal is to make you happy

because he can only stay in business when he has people who depend on him. That is where he derives his sense of self-worth.

In the religious world, Dr. Feel Goods are a dime a dozen. Their sermons are watered down, sugar-coated, and diluted of any mention of sin (**2 Cor 2:17**). They will never rebuke you unless exposed of their malpractice, at which point they'll pick up their scalpel to wound rather than fix you because Dr. Feel Good can only stay in business if he can acquire volatile Christians who depend on his quick fixes. Tragically and ironically, Dr. Feel Good is who he is because he cannot fix himself, and therefore becomes just as codependent on unstable Christians as they are on him. It is a vicious, deadly cycle for disciples who lack the faith and courage to seek help elsewhere.

The Great Physician, Jesus Christ, however, is fully qualified to cure us from the disease of sin. While most doctors require years of schooling, He has been qualified from eternity (**1 Pet 1:20; Eph 1:4**). Having no need of our charts, he is perfectly acquainted with our sickness, knowing us better than we know ourselves (**John 2:25**). As someone who sympathizes with our weaknesses (**Heb 4:15**), He has the perfect bedside manner. But unlike Dr. Feel Good, He knows how to use that scalpel to cut right into the problem and help us (**Heb 4:12**). While some doctors are too booked or fearful of contracting our disease, Jesus makes house calls (**Matt 11:28**); and no disease is too dreadful that He is not willing to lay His beautiful, healing hands upon (**Luke 5:12-13**). And our Great Physician has never lost a patient when He is willing to take the cure for this dreaded disease called sin.

If you are a Christian who is not getting the spiritual medicine you need, there are other physicians-in-training available to help guide you to the Great Physician. It may be hard medicine and the knife may hurt from time to time; but only the pure, unadulterated word of God can heal you of your disease.